A Synopsis for Ph.D. Registration

On

Comparative Analysis of Women Entrepreneurs in Cooperative and Individual Business Models: A Study from Ranchi District, Jharkhand

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1. Introduction

India, the world's largest democracy, has experienced significant transformation in its economic landscape over the past few decades. From being primarily agrarian in the mid-20th century to becoming one of the fastest-growing economies globally, India has seen an impressive shift towards a more diversified and market-oriented economy. At the heart of this economic evolution lies the rise of entrepreneurship, which has played a crucial role in driving innovation, creating employment, and improving living standards.

1.1 Entrepreneurship & Economic Development

Entrepreneurship is a process through which an individual creates business & employment based on his/her innovative ideas. It has long been recognized as a key driver of economic growth and development. As economies across the world continue to evolve in response to technological advancements, global competition, and shifting market demands, the role of entrepreneurs in stimulating economic progress has become even more crucial. Entrepreneurs not only create new businesses but also generate jobs, drive innovation, and contribute to the diversification of industries. Their capacity to adapt to market changes and respond to consumer needs directly impacts the prosperity of a nation.

Economic development, in its essence, encompasses improvements in standards of living, poverty reduction, equitable income distribution, and sustainable growth. The link between entrepreneurship and economic development is particularly evident in how new ventures contribute to these dimensions. Start-ups and small businesses fuel job creation, attract investments, and promote competition, which in turn fosters efficiency and innovation. Moreover, entrepreneurship can lead to the development of new industries, enhancing economic resilience and promoting technological advancements.

1.2 Entrepreneurship growth in India & its impact

Several studies have been done to understand the impact of entrepreneurship on Indian economy. Indian entrepreneurship has evolved remarkably, with a surge in both small-scale businesses and large, innovative ventures. While entrepreneurship in India has deep historical roots, it is in recent years that a thriving start-up ecosystem has taken shape.

Government policies such as "Make in India," "Startup India," and "Digital India" have further encouraged entrepreneurial growth, fostering innovation in technology, manufacturing, and services.

Entrepreneurship and economic development supplements each other to make development sustainable. Indian entrepreneurship is playing a significant role in driving economic development across various sectors. India is a global leader in IT and software services, with companies like TCS, Infosys, Wipro, and HCL driving innovation and providing services worldwide. New tech start-ups have come up with innovative solutions to several societal problems. The rise of e-commerce platforms such as Flipkart, Snapdeal, and the dominance of Amazon in India has revolutionized the retail sector. Entrepreneurs are investing in solar, wind, and other renewable energy solutions. Companies like ReNew Power and Suzlon are spearheading this sector.

Furthermore, Indian entrepreneurs are introducing innovation in agriculture through agri-tech startups like Ninjacart, AgroStar, and DeHaat, which provide solutions for better crop yield, supply chain management, and digital tools for farmers. Fintech startups like PhonePe, and Razorpay are reshaping how financial services are delivered in India. Startups like Byju's, Unacademy, and Vedantu are transforming the education landscape in India. Entrepreneurs are contributing to the growth of the tourism and hospitality industry, with companies like OYO Rooms, MakeMyTrip, and Traveloka offering innovative solutions in travel booking, accommodation, and hospitality services. Entrepreneurs are innovating in transportation and logistics with companies like Ola, Uber, and Delhivery, which have revolutionized urban mobility and logistics. Start-ups are focusing on sustainable solutions, from waste management to sustainable fashion, such as companies like Daily Dump, Recykal, and Lenskart's eco-friendly initiatives.

The rise of entrepreneurship in several sectors discussed above has helped in generating sustainable solutions to environmental issues, generated employment in rural and semi urban areas, promoted transparency & ease of doing business through innovative digital solutions and hence attracted global investments. Further, several steps have been taken by the Indian government to improve the quality of entrepreneurship. Studies have also emphasized that policy makers must focus on improving the quality of entrepreneurship in the developing economies[1] to improve employability and accelerate the growth.

1.3 Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Indian economy

Amidst the rise of wave of entrepreneurship in India, women have played an increasingly prominent role, though their participation has historically been limited. However, in recent years, women entrepreneurs in India have demonstrated resilience, innovation, and leadership, contributing significantly to both the economy and the social fabric of the nation.

The concept of women entrepreneurship in India is not just about women running businesses but also about breaking societal norms, overcoming systemic barriers, and creating an enabling environment for others to follow. Despite facing challenges such as limited access to finance, gender biases, and societal expectations, women entrepreneurs are making significant strides in various sectors, ranging from technology and manufacturing to retail, education, and healthcare.

Labour force participation index is a significant metric for development of an economy. Today, by becoming entrepreneurs, women contribute to increasing female labour force participation in India, which has traditionally been low compared to global standards. Women entrepreneurs are creating more job opportunities for other women. Their success stories inspire other women to break free from traditional roles and consider entrepreneurship as a viable career option. This leads to a more inclusive labour market, with women playing a more significant role in driving the economy.

There are several notable examples of women-led entrepreneurial ventures in India. *Nykaa* is one of India's leading e-commerce platforms for beauty and wellness products. Falguni Nayar, a former investment banker, founded Nykaa in 2012, and the platform has since expanded into retail stores and become a significant player in the Indian beauty industry. *The Moms Co.* offers a range of toxin-free, natural products for expecting mothers and babies. The brand is created to provide chemical-free skincare alternatives for new mothers and their babies. It is founded by Malika Khatri, Organic Skincare and Wellness specialist. *Giva* is an online jewellery brand that focuses on affordable and high-quality silver jewellery. Founded by Mansi Gupta, it has become popular for its stylish designs and accessible price points, especially among young consumers. Similarly there are many other examples from wide range of sectors like agriculture, food products, online marketplace, event management & lifestyle.

Thus, summarizing their role, we can say that women entrepreneurs in India are making substantial contributions to the economy by creating jobs, driving innovation, and fostering inclusive growth. Their role extends beyond economic benefits, as they are instrumental in promoting social change, gender equality, and empowering other women. However, for their full potential to be realized, challenges like access to funding, societal barriers, and gender biases need to be addressed. With the right support and policies, women entrepreneurs can continue to play a transformative role in India's economic development. The Government of India has taken several ease of dosing business steps to resolve the challenges being faced by Indian women entrepreneurs.

1.4 Rise of Women Entrepreneurship in Jharkhand

The rise of women entrepreneurship in Jharkhand is a reflection of the changing economic landscape and the growing recognition of women's potential in business. Jharkhand, a state rich in natural resources and diverse cultures, has seen several initiatives aimed at empowering women and supporting their entrepreneurial ventures.

The government of Jharkhand has introduced various programs aimed at empowering women through entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as Jharkhand State Rural Livelihoods Mission (JSRLM), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and other skill development schemes have been pivotal in providing women with the necessary tools to become successful entrepreneurs. A focused society named *Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS)* has been formed to have convergence based approach for women led entrepreneurship. *Palash brand units* have been introduced in several districts of Jharkhand to scale up the existing work being done by women entrepreneurs. These initiatives focus on enhancing financial literacy, leadership skills, and access to markets.

In rural Jharkhand, **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** have played a critical role in fostering women's entrepreneurship. These groups work together to set up small businesses such as weaving, handicrafts, poultry farming, and food production. Many a times women form *cooperatives* like farmer produce companies to run an enterprise and many a times they work *individually* on their ideas locally.

Gumla Grameen Poultry Cooperative & Dumka Silk Weaving Cooperative are some of the notable examples of women working in groups. On the other hand, *Kanta Devi*, a

resident of a rural area in Ranchi, Jharkhand, has become an individual entrepreneur by selling handmade traditional items like Sohrai and Khovar paintings, which are indigenous to the region. Her work has gained recognition, and she has expanded her business to include other local artisans, promoting Jharkhand's rich cultural heritage. Similarly, *Pooja Mehta*, an entrepreneur from Ranchi, Jharkhand, started a boutique specializing in traditional and modern attire. Her boutique caters to women's fashion, with a focus on providing stylish and affordable clothing. Further, *Seema Kumari* started a food processing business in Ranchi, Jharkhand, producing healthy and nutritious food products like pickles, jams, and sauces using locally grown fruits and vegetables. Her business focuses on providing women with a sustainable income by creating opportunities for local farmers and women entrepreneurs.

Thus, the rise of women entrepreneurship in Jharkhand and Ranchi district is a testament to the resilience and entrepreneurial spirit of women in the region. With increasing support from government initiatives, NGOs, and the private sector, women in Jharkhand are overcoming traditional barriers and emerging as leaders in various industries. As the ecosystem continues to evolve, the state is likely see more women breaking through glass ceilings and contributing significantly to the economic growth and social development of Jharkhand.

1.5 The Two Business Models of Women Entrepreneurship in Jharkhand & Ranchi district

As discussed above, in Jharkhand, women entrepreneurs have adopted various business models that cater to both local needs and broader market demands. Among these, two key business models stand out for their impact, scalability, and inclusivity. They are

1.5.1 Collective Entrepreneurship through forming Cooperative societies

This model is centred around the power of collaboration and community, where women come together to form cooperative societies for mutual benefit. These groups typically operate in *rural areas*, leveraging *collective strength* and resources to run various micro-enterprises.

The characteristic of this model is that a group of women, often from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, pool their resources, skills, and labour to run a business entity. The enterprises in this model can span from various sectors, including food processing, handicrafts, weaving, agriculture, dairy farming, poultry farming, and more. Micro-loans and credit facilities from government schemes, banks, or NGOs are utilised for funding of the project. The focus is on providing training and capacity-building initiatives for women, enhancing their entrepreneurial skills, and enabling them to manage their businesses effectively.

Case study – Gumla Gramin Poultry Cooperative Society

It is a cooperative society formed in Gumla district of Jharkhand. The women leading this cooperative society had been very poor prior to establishment of this society. They hardly had enough to feed themselves for twice meal a day. Thus, a women led cooperative was started in 2002 focused on poultry farming. Around 1000 tribal women have joined the society since inception and today it is doing business with crores of turnover. The women have been empowered with increased income and better living standards. Average monthly income of each member has increased by approximately 5000 rupees per month[2].

The major impact of formation of such societies is that poor women earn appropriate income, gain financial independence, and improve their social standing within their communities. The model promotes collective decision-making, leadership skills, and a sense of community among women. By pooling resources, women reduce risks and share the benefits of entrepreneurship.

1.5.2 Individual Entrepreneurship based Women-led Businesses

This business model focuses on independent women entrepreneurs who run businesses on their own, often in *urban or semi-urban* areas of Jharkhand. These businesses are typically based on *individual skills*, innovation, and market demand.

In this model, the entrepreneurs run their businesses independently, often after receiving training or financial support from government programs, NGOs, or microfinance institutions. The focus is on specific sectors like fashion (boutiques, tailoring), retail

(small stores, e-commerce), food production (catering, packaged foods), education (coaching centres, tuition), and more. Most of these businesses focus on innovation, and with access to markets through e-commerce platforms where they can scale their ventures beyond local boundaries. This model often results in higher profit actualization however with higher risks in business.

Case Study - **Boutiques and Fashion Retail**

A 28 year old woman from Ranchi has set up boutiques that cater to both traditional and modern fashion needs, creating a brand with regional and national appeal. She has used her skill to train few more women to run her enterprise. Loan has been taken from Pradhan Mantri Employment Generation Program to finance the project. Due to individual level business, there is autonomy in decision making however the decisions have higher risks. The average monthly income of the woman is around 25000 rupees in the peak seasons. Similarly, entrepreneurs like Renu Devi have set up businesses focused on organic farming, offering locally produced organic vegetables and fruits, as well as processed products like pickles and jams. Women like Seema Kumari have built businesses around food processing, producing and packaging regional specialties for local and broader markets.

Thus in this model, women achieve financial independence and often serve as role models for other women in their communities. Many individual women entrepreneurs hire others, especially women, helping create a ripple effect of employment opportunities. Through digital platforms and local networks, women can reach a broader audience, enhancing their market presence and profitability.

Hence, the two dominant business models— **Collective Entrepreneurship through forming Cooperative societies** and **Individual Women-led Businesses**—are both crucial to fostering women's entrepreneurship in Jharkhand. While cooperative societies focus on collective strength and community-driven enterprises, individual women entrepreneurs bring innovation, independence, and scalability to the local economy. Both models contribute significantly to economic empowerment, social development, and the creation of a more inclusive business ecosystem in the state.

2. Literature Review

A literature review is a critical summary and evaluation of existing research, theories, and scholarly work related to a specific topic or research question. It shows the context of the study by summarizing the work of other scholars and identifying how the present research fits into the existing body of knowledge. The review often delves into the key concepts, theories, and frameworks relevant to the topic, helping to define important terms or perspectives. Thus in essence, a literature review is a way of setting the stage for the present research by showing what has already been studied, what has been found, and where the current research will contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation.

Women entrepreneurship in India has gained significant attention over the years, particularly as women are increasingly entering the workforce and starting their own businesses. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) and various reports by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, there has been a steady increase in the number of women entrepreneurs. The research suggests that even though women entrepreneurs constitute a rapidly rising demographic yet are largely understudied, particularly in comparison with their male counterparts[3].

Study suggests that entrepreneurship is crucial for economic development of a nation[4]. Women entrepreneurship in India has made significant strides, driven by increased education and awareness among women, despite facing deep-rooted social challenges. Various studies highlight not only the achievements of women entrepreneurs but also the systemic barriers they encounter and the support systems that have emerged to foster their growth. It has been pointed out that the persistent challenges for women entrepreneurs include traditional societal norms that hinder their full participation in the business sector, even as they demonstrate remarkable resilience and success[5].

India ranks poorly in global indices for women business ownership[6]. According to MasterCard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (2017), India is ranked at 50 out of 54 countries studied with around only 8.2% of women business owners as compared to total business owners. Thus, there is a significant need to promote and study women entrepreneurship to improve our labour force participation index.

Kakati, B.K. & Kakoty S. (2022) have studied the growth of women entrepreneurship in rural India with a focus on significance of **cooperative model** of working. They have analysed the *Gumla Grameen Poultry Self-Supporting Co-operative Society Ltd.'s* impact on women empowerment in Gumla; a tribal dominated district in Jharkhand. The cooperative society model of working has played significant role in empowering women at several levels. The impact is highest at individual level followed by household level and then societal level. Traditional norms and patriarchy hinder empowerment at the household and societal levels.

Further, cooperative model is observed more successful in rural areas of the state. Women's cooperatives can enable economic security and enhance entrepreneurial behaviour, fostering social inclusion and empowerment in communities[7]. Government initiatives, such as the establishment of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in rural areas and financing mechanism like Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana & subsidised loan schemes have played a crucial role in empowering the rural women by enhancing their income and social standing.

Goyal, M. & Prakash, J. (2011) have studied role of urban middle class women who majorly work on **individual model** of entrepreneurship[8]. A case study of Mrs. Rajni Bector (founder of Cremica group of companies) is exemplified to understand the opportunities and challenges of starting a project individually from scratch and taking it to a multi crore company.

Thus, the studies on women entrepreneurship have distinctly studied the cooperative and individual framework of working. Most of the studies are based on case studies of business models functioning currently. Research trends show that there is a growing body of literature examining women entrepreneurs, pointing out the necessity for comprehensive models that accommodate the unique factors influencing both cooperative and individual pursuits[9.]

3. Research Gap

Most of the existing research focus on the general success of women entrepreneurs in either cooperative or individual models, but there is limited comparative analysis that directly contrasts the outcomes, challenges, and benefits of these two models in Ranchi

district, Jharkhand. This study will explore several unexplored or under explored areas regarding this topic.

The comparative effects on economic independence, empowerment, and social mobility are underexplored. Studies have explored women's access to resources, but a detailed comparison of resource accessibility—such as financial support, training, marketing, networking, and mentorship—in both cooperative and individual models could highlight gaps in governmental or institutional support that differ based on the business model. Also, there are limited research into the long-term sustainability of women-led cooperatives vs. individual businesses in Jharkhand. What factors contribute to the success or failure of these business models over time? Are women-led cooperatives more sustainable than individual enterprises in the long run, and what challenges do they face? These are some of the important questions that need to be addressed.

Addressing the above highlighted gaps would contribute significantly to understanding the comparative entrepreneurial landscape for women in Ranchi, Jharkhand, enabling better policy recommendations, and more effective interventions aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment through either cooperative or individual business models.

4. Scope of Study

The study will focus specifically on the women of Ranchi, Jharkhand; examining women entrepreneurs from diverse regions within the district, including urban, rural, and tribal areas. Given the socio-economic diversity, this *geographical focus* will allow for a comparative analysis of how location influences women's entrepreneurial choices in cooperative vs. individual models.

The *target population* will be women entrepreneurs who are actively involved in either cooperative or individual business models. This includes women leading businesses in various small and medium-sized enterprises in sectors such as agriculture, handicrafts, textiles, small-scale manufacturing, services, etc. Further, it will distinguish between entrepreneurs in cooperative settings (where women collaborate in groups to run businesses) and those who are individually running businesses (sole proprietorships or family-owned enterprises).

The research will also take into account women from different social, economic, and educational backgrounds, considering the diversity of experiences. The *timeframe* of the study includes both the current landscape and the historical evolution of women's entrepreneurship in Jharkhand, tracing trends and changes over a period of time (e.g., the last 10-15 years). This will include changes in policies, government initiatives, and the economic climate affecting women entrepreneurs.

In summary, the scope of this study would be comprehensive, encompassing geographical, demographic, and sectoral factors, with a specific focus on comparing cooperative and individual business models for women entrepreneurs in Ranchi, Jharkhand. It will provide insights into their motivations, challenges, socio-economic impacts, and the role of institutional and governmental support systems, contributing valuable data for policy and development efforts aimed at empowering women in business.

5. Research Objectives

1. To examine the financial sustainability and growth prospects of women-led businesses in cooperative versus individual models.
2. To study the profile, demography and business preferences of women entrepreneurs in both models in Ranchi, Jharkhand.
3. To evaluate the role of support systems (capital, market, government programs etc.) in shaping the success of women entrepreneurs in both models.

6. Research Questions

The above research objectives can be achieved by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do cooperative and individual women entrepreneurship models compare in terms of average annual return per member in Ranchi, Jharkhand?
2. How sustainable are women-led cooperative businesses compared to individual businesses in Ranchi, Jharkhand in terms of profitability, growth, and long-term viability?

3. How do the profile of above two women entrepreneurship models differ in terms of geography, demography, income & business preferences in Ranchi, Jharkhand?
4. How does access to capital, market and financial resources differ between women operating individually and those involved in cooperative models?

7. Research Hypothesis

The following are the three hypotheses for this research topic:

H1: Women entrepreneurs in individual business models are more likely to experience higher profitability and business growth than those in cooperative business models in Ranchi.

H2: Women-led cooperative businesses in Jharkhand are more sustainable and resilient in the long term compared to women-led individual businesses.

H3: Women entrepreneurs in individual business models face greater challenges related to access to capital, market and financial resources compared to women in cooperative business models in Ranchi.

These hypotheses are designed to test various aspects of women's entrepreneurship in cooperative versus individual business models, considering economic, social, and cultural factors. The hypotheses will help in identifying the key differences and similarities in these models and how they contribute to women's empowerment, business success, and community impact in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

8. Research Design & Methodology

The study will adopt a ***comparative research design***, with a focus on understanding and comparing the entrepreneurial experiences of women in cooperative versus individual business models in Ranchi, Jharkhand. This design will allow for a clear comparison of various factors such as profitability, motivations, challenges, economic impact, and sustainability of the two business models. Given the complexity of the subject, a ***mixed-methods approach*** will be used, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

8.1 Type of Study

A comparative descriptive study will be done compare the characteristics of women entrepreneurs in cooperative and individual business models. Explanatory study will be done to explore the reasons behind the differences between the two business models in terms of socio-economic factors, challenges, and outcomes. Further, cross sectional study will be done to understand data collected at a single point in time to understand the several comparative metrics.

8.2 Research Methodology

This study will adopt a mixed-methods approach with two component - quantitative (survey-based) and qualitative (interviews, case studies).

8.2.1 Quantitative Methodology

A structured survey questionnaire will be designed to gather data on various aspects such as demographic information, type of business, geography, profitability & growth, factors affecting business decisions, challenges & barriers faced, access to finance, market, and institutional support etc.

The survey will be conducted with a sample of 50-100 women entrepreneurs from both cooperative and individual business models across Ranchi district Jharkhand (including rural, tribal, and urban areas).

Stratified Random Sampling will be used where the data will be divided into different regions based on urban/rural and tribal/non-tribal areas, ensuring representation from diverse demographics. Further within each stratum, a simple random sampling technique will be used to select women entrepreneurs for the survey.

Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, frequency, percentage) will be done to summarize the demographic and business data. And, *inferential statistics* (e.g., t-tests, chi-square tests, regression analysis) will be used to compare differences between cooperative and individual business models on various variables such as profitability, business growth, and challenges.

8.2.2 Qualitative Methodology

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of women entrepreneurs (around 20-30) from both business models. These interviews will help explore the deeper, subjective experiences, motivations, and challenges of the women entrepreneurs. The interviews will focus on motivations, decision making process, leadership styles, social & cultural barriers, cooperative dynamics & individual autonomy.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) will be conducted with women entrepreneurs from both models (cooperative and individual) to further explore collective perceptions of business success, challenges, and support systems. The FGDs will allow for discussion of broader issues that may not be captured in individual interviews.

Detailed case studies of selected women entrepreneurs will be developed to provide an in-depth look at the personal and business journey, focusing on the socio-cultural context, leadership style, and outcomes in both cooperative and individual business models.

8.3 Ethical Considerations

All participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent will be obtained before data collection. Participants' privacy will be respected, and all collected data will be kept confidential and anonymized. Participation will be voluntary, and participants will be free to withdraw at any point without penalty. Given the diverse and rural nature of the sample, data collection will be culturally sensitive, especially considering the role of women in different communities. Thus, the cultural sensitivity will be taken care of while doing the research data collection.

Hence, this research design and methodology will provide a robust framework for comparing the experiences and outcomes of women entrepreneurs in cooperative and individual business models in Ranchi, Jharkhand. It will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the economic, social, and cultural dimensions of women's entrepreneurship in this unique context.

9. Limitations

The study may have limitations due to geographical limits, lower diversity in sample selection, having short term data of a specific time rather than focusing on long term sustainability. Reaching women entrepreneurs in remote and rural areas might pose logistical challenges. A limited sample size may restrict the ability to generalize findings. There may be bias in self reporting where women may present a more positive view of their business models. Further, language differences could pose challenges, particularly in tribal areas where Hindi or English may not be widely understood.

Tentative Chapterization

Sl. No.	Name of Chapters
1.	Introduction, Review of Literature & Profile of Ranchi distrcit
2.	Entrepreneurship & its Growth in India
3.	Role & Rise of Women Entrepreneurship and its growth in India & Jharkhand
4.	The Two Business Models of Women Entrepreneurship in Jharkhand & Ranchi district
5.	Data Collection, Analysis & Hypothesis Testing
6.	Conclusion, Findings & Suggestions

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